A Living

TESTIMONY

From the Power and Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ in our Faithful

Womens Meeting

AND

CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

Given forth in the Universal Union, and Approbation thereof, according to our several Proportions of Faith and Life, in the same Spirit.

THe Spirit of *Grace* having freely visited all *Mankind*, the Lord hath had regard unto the low estate of his *Servants* and *Handmaids*, notwithstanding the *Enmity* and *Subtilty* and *secreet Smitings* of that Spirit which seeks to *Divide* and lay *Waste* the *Heritage* of God, whom he hath Quickned, and Raised up *Heirs* of Life together, in the *Fellowship of* the Gospel of Peace, which stands in the *Unity* of that Spirit which gives *Life*; and our *Life*, *Pease* and *Joy* is increased in the Lord one toward another, where-

by we are made *Living* Members of that Body which Chriſt Jeſus our Lord is *Head*, Glory to our God forever.

And we being turned to the Spirit of *Grace* and *Light* of Chriſt do believe in the Light, and are become *Children* of his Light, of his Day, and ſo *Members* of his holy Body, of which Chriſt is the Living and Eternal heavenly Head; and by the Spirit of Grace we are come into Favour with God, and into the Order of his Goſpel, and are his *Daughters*, *Servants* and *Handmaids*; and we have a Heavenly propriety in the *Light*, *Power* and *Spirit* of *Grace*, and the *Goſpel*, being *Heirs* of the ſame; ſo by Grace we are called into the Work and Service of God and Jeſus Chriſt, that they require of us in our Age and Generation, and we have our Wiſdom from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Rock of Ages, and the Foundation of many Generations, who is made unto us Wiſdom; and he hath enlightned our Spirits, which is the Candle of the Lord, which his heavenly divine Light, which is the Life that is in Chriſt, the Word by which all things were made, that we might all ſee and know the Will of God, and do it, and know our ſeveral Works and Services the Lord requireth of us in his Church, we are not to put our Candles under a Buſhel, nor to hide our Talents in a Napkin, as the ſloathful do; but we are to have Oyl in our Lamps, like Wiſe Virgins to the Lord; and our Lamps are to burn, and our Lights are to ſhine, that we may all ſee clearly our Work and Service; namely, To help Families that are Poor, and have Children, and to ſee that they are diligent to improve things to the beſt; that they are not ſlothful in their buſineſs, no Waſters, and that they put their Children to ſome Imployment, as ſoon as they are capable; for the Truth hath a lively operation, it brings People to be diligent in all things, ſerving the Lord. For we which have been Mothers of Children, and Antient VVomen in

our

dus Families, do know, in the VVisdom of God, what will do in Families, in Truth and Righteousness, and according to the Families; and so are able, through the VVisdom of God, to instruct such as want Instruction, and so are Helps to them in their Families: And as the Apostle saith, *The Elder Women are to be Teachers of good things, and instruct and teach the Younger to be Sober, and love their Husbands and Children, and to be discreet, good and chaste, that the Word of God be not blasphemed.*

So here is a great charge and care lies upon these Aged Women in the Truth, who are to teach these good things, that the Younger be trained up in that which is good, sober and discreet, chaste and virtuous; so to be kept before they Marry, and after they are Married, sober, and to love their Husbands, and Children, and bring them up in the fear of the Lord, that the Name of the Lord be not blasphemed. Here we Aged Women in the Truth, have a Gift to be exercised in; and such a care lieth upon us, that the Church of Christ be not scandalized.

And we have a concern, as in *Tit.* 2. relating to Marriages, both before and after they are Marryed; and such Elderly Women in the Truth, are to be intreated as Mothers, and so not to be Railed upon; and the Younger, as Sisters, with all Purity, and Widows, that are VVidows indeed, are to be honoured; and if they have Children or Nephews, let them learn first to shew Piety or Kindness at Home, and to requite their Parents and Kindred; for this is good and acceptable before God.

Now this is a good Lesson for the VVidows, to instruct their Children and Nephews to Practice. And so we may see such holy VVomen, that were taken into the Number and Society in that day, were to be well reported for good

Works, *Lodging Strangers*, and *Relieving the Afflicted*, and if she have diligently followed every good VVork; these were of the Number of *good Women*, that were taken into the Number for their *good Works* and *Service* in the Church of Christ, and that were recorded for their Works and Service to the Lord.

Now here is a diligent Practice and Exercise in the Power and Spirit of God, and to be diligent in every *good Work* and *Service*, *To relieve the Afflicted, and to bring up Children in the fear of God; and to be Teachers of good things, and Instructors of the Younger, that the Name of God be not Blasphemed.*

So here you may see the Apostle was of another Mind than those perverse corrupt Minds, full of *Envy* and *Strife*, *Railing* and *evil Surmizing*, and some that wilfully, scoffingly, maliciously and revilingly call the *Womens Meetings* an *Idol* and an *Image*; but such Raging Waves of the Sea have but foamed out their own Shame, and manifested they are erred from the Spirit of Grace, which God poureth forth upon *Daughters*, *Servants* and *Hand-maids*, which have received as well as Sons, and are to improve their Talents and measure of the Gift of God, and *not to grieve nor quench the holy Spirit*, nor *walk despightfully against the Spirit of Grace*, as some do, whereby we are sealed to the day of Redemption.

And concerning *Marriages*, it being God's joyning, and his Ordinance, we Women in the Spirit and Grace of God, being livng Members of the Church of Christ, do see with the Spirit of God, our Service concerning Marriage, that both Young and Old that profess Gods Truth, may go together orderly, first having their Relations consent; for many times we having seen, and do see more in the Young People and Widdows State and Condition, than some of the Men, because we are more amongst them; so in that we dare

dare not neglect our Gift in the Spirit of Wisdom and Grace, but exercise and improve it to this glory and honour, and in that we are meet Helps in the *Spirit of God*, to the Men, our Brethren; knowing that *Male and Female are one in Christ*; for the *Unity* and *Fellowship* of *Sons* and *Daughters*, *Widdows* and *Servants*, stands in the *Spirit of God*, and we in the same Spirit know our *great Service* to look after and *visit the Sick* that want *Nurses* to help them, and sometimes assisting the Men, our Brethren, to the placing out our *poor Friends Children to Apprentices*, and other good *Services* that the *Spirit of God* leadeth us to, and into the practice of the *pure Religion*, and that all such as do profess the *Grace of God*, may live and walk *godly*, *righteously* and *soberly in their Lives and Conversation*, all such as profess the *Word of God* may be *Doers* of the *Word of God*; for all that *fear God and work Righteousness*, *are accepted with God*. And so, the *Aged Women in the Truth* were and are to be Teachers of such good things; but such *wanton Women* or *Widdows*, *that are Tale-carriers and busie Bodies*, *that speak things they ought not*, and such *Men* that are in *Envy* and *Strife*, *and are puft up with high swelling Words of Vanity*, *and vain unruly Talkers*, *Despisers of them that are good*, *having got into the form of Godliness*, *but not in the Power*: Such were in the Apostles days, as well as now, reproved by the Spirit of God, and turned away from; and we cannot receive their Chaff and Husks for the *Seed*, *Wheat*, or the *Bread of Life*; neither their *Earthly sensual Wisdom* for the *Wisdom of God*; and therefore have several of such unruly Spirits printed and written so many slanderous reproachful Books against us, and made disturbance against our Meetings, under a false pretence, as though they would call us to our *own*, *as it was in the beginning*; which if they themselves had kept to that that first convinced them, they would have shewed forth a *quiet and meek Spirit*, who under a pretence of *calling People to their own*, have drawn People from their

own;

own; for we are come to our *Light*, *Spirit*, *Grace* and *Word of Life*, and *Anointing within* which is our own, which at first convinced us, and which doth teach us to be *Doers* of the *Word of God*, and to *live Righteously*, and to practice the *true Religion*; and them that do not, the spirit of the Lord moveth us, and teacheth us to admonish and exhort them to *forsake the Evil, and cleave to the Good*; and them that oppose the Practice and Care, in the Spirit and Grace of *God*, of *Men* and *Women* in their *Meetings*, had they kept to the *Light*, *Grace*, *Truth* and *Spirit of God*, and *Unction within them*, they would have been one with us in the same, and in the practice of the *pure Religion*, and in the *Godly Care* for *God's Honour*; but many of them are turned *Mockers*, *Scoffers*, *Writers* and *Printers* against us, and are become *vain Talkers*. But we leave them to the Lord, to deal with according to their Words and Works: And we right-well know our *Services*, which the Spirit of Grace hath led us to in the Church of Christ.

And as to our orderly proceeding toward *Marriage*, we say and affirm, the *Man* and *Woman* both ought to appear at the *Monethly Meetings*, and Meetings for such Services, where we and the Men may hear what both have to say, that Men and Women may not be wronged of their Children, and that they are clear from all other Persons, that the Meeting, and all others concerned, may have satisfaction, in that *Life*, *Grace* and *Spirit* of *Christ*, in which is our Unity, and may be *faithful Witnesses* both to God and Men, in our own *Gift of Grace*, in which God hath, and doth own us: And all that *write*, and *print*, and *speak* against our *Practice* (which the *Spirit of Grace* hath led us to in the *Church of Christ*) reach us not, neither are they of any credit with us; For we have *put on the Breast-plate of Faith and Love, and for an Helmet, the Hope of Salvation.* And so our desires are, *That whatever things are pure, vertuous, lovely, sober, honest, and of good Report,* and

and that every one may follow that which makes for *Peace*, and that they may ſtudy to be *Quiet*, and do the Lords Buſineſs in his Spirit and Power, and their own in Truth and Righteouſneſs, and walk as Children of the Light, in the day of Chriſt, and in meekneſs inſtruct them that oppoſe themſelves, *If God peradventure may give them Repentance to the acknowledgment of the Truth*; *Greet one another with a holy Kiſs of Charity*; *Peace be with you all that are in Chriſt Jeſus, Amen*, Rom.16. 1 Cor.16.20. 2 Cor.13.22. 1 Pet.5.14.

Now this holy Kiſs of *Charity* is wanting, and not to be found, nor expected from them that do not walk in the Spirit of God. And the Apoſtle ſaith, *I intreat thee, true Yokefellow, help theſe Women which laboured with me in the Goſpel, with* Clement *alſo, and with others my Fellow-Labourers, whoſe Names are written in the Book of Life, Phil.4.3. There is one God and Father of all, which is above all, and through you all, and in you all by his Spirit.* So all may ſee with his Spirit, the Lord is near unto all to teach them to know their Service; and if theſe do lack wiſdom, to ask it of God, who giveth liberally, and take counſel of him who is nigh unto you, and walk worthy of the Lords mercies, being faithful in every good work; for to do good & communicate, is a Sacrifice well pleaſing to the Lord, and we who are made the Sons and Daughters, Servants and Handmaids, by the Spirit of God, in the ſame Spirit we have Unity and Fellowſhip, though we be abſent in body one from another, yet we are preſent in the ſame Spirit, and by the ſpiritual Eye do ſee and behold, and rejoyce in our ſpiritual Order, and one anothers ſtedfaſtneſs in Chriſt Jeſus. And ſo we have a communion in the Holy Ghoſt, both Sons and Daughters; and if any thing the Men do ſee that is more proper for the Women to do, and to look into, they do let us know of it, as Siſters in the Truth; and if any thing we ſee that is more proper for the Men, than for us, then we let them know as our Brethren in the Truth; ſo in this we do

aſſiſt

assist each other in the Spirit and Truth, and are meet helps in the heavenly spiritual Union and Communion, and Fellowship and Society, and do know the unity of the Spirit of Christ, which is the Bond of Peace, and in this heavenly Spirit that reaches through all, and over all, and is in you all, our dear Sisters every where, in Christ Jesus, 'tis you we visit, to whom we recommend this Epistle, *Farewel.*

Postscript.

WE have been a People that have sought the Lord, and now we have found him, we are willing to obey him in his Power and holy Spirit, that he hath given us to enable us so to do; and though we are persecuted in spirit, and other ways, by unruly Tongues that have not power with their hands; such that are Sayers *of the the Word of God, and* Talkers *of the Grace of God, and of the Righteousness of Christ, but not* Doers *of the Word, nor walkers in the Righteousness and Grace of God, their ungracious Languages and Words, that they have Spoken and Printed against us, shew the Trees and their Fruit, whom we desire may come to the Light of Christ, that with it they may see themselves, and repent; for we desire the Salvation and Eternal Good of all.*

Signed by us, in the behalf of the rest of our sincere Minded Members of our Meeting,

London, from our Womens Meeting, gathered out of the City and Suburbs, the 1*st*. *of the* 4*th Moneth*, 1685.

Mary Foster,
Mary Elson,
Anne Travice,
Ruth Crouch,
Susannah Dew,
Mary Plumstead.

THE END.

299480